

**37th session of the General Conference of UNESCO
Speech by the head of the Japanese delegation**

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Mr. President,
Madame Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me express my sincere congratulations on your appointment, Mr. President.

Mr. President,

The 37th session of the General Conference is extremely important for UNESCO's coming eight years. The current financial situation of UNESCO should be taken as a chance to further promote the careful selection of programmes, the streamlining of administrative operations and the restoration of financial stability. Japan would like to provide all possible support for the continuous reform initiatives by Madame Director-General Bokova.

Mr. President,

UNESCO should take firm ownership of the global education agenda beyond 2015, while clarifying the challenges to achieving Education for All. I believe that addressing EFA together with Education for Sustainable Development can bring effective improvements in the quality of education.

The Japanese Government and UNESCO are jointly organizing the UNESCO World Conference on ESD in November next year in Nagoya City of Aichi Prefecture and Okayama City. Today, representatives of the host cities have joined us here.

We hope that many ministers from Member States, high-level representatives from international organizations and a wide range of stakeholders will attend this conference. It provides a good opportunity to reflect on the UN Decade of ESD, and to discuss concrete actions to promote ESD beyond 2014.

I also look forward to an even greater contribution of UNESCO to the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. President,

At the previous session of the General Conference, Japan proposed an integrated approach to global issues called “Sustainability Science.” It encompasses natural sciences and social and human sciences. We hope this will be reflected in the Medium-Term Strategy and the Programmes and Budget to be discussed at this session.

Mr. President,

UNESCO could contribute further to cultural diversity not least by the protection of World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage as well as the prevention of the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

As indicated in the Kyoto Vision issued in Japan last year, all the local communities and other stakeholders should make further efforts to protect and safeguard our heritages.

Mr. President,

Two years and a half have now passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake. The Japanese Government has been doing everything possible to reconstruct the affected areas and restore the schools. In addition, education rebuilding is one of the most important policy challenges today in Japan. I believe our experiences may be useful for UNESCO and

Member States to expand and improve the quality of education.

I would like to conclude by expressing my high expectation to Madame Director-General Bokova's strong leadership for UNESCO's further development and contribution to the international community. I hope to see even more Member States offering their full support to UNESCO.

Thank you for your attention.